CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A messaging system, comprising:

   a first computer and a second computer connected via a network;

5   a first Edge Terminal Device (ETD) connected to the first computer and a second ETD
          connected to the second computer;

   the first ETD being responsive to a received message transmitted by the second ETD to
          reproduce content of the received message and to accept user input in response to
          the message.

10   2. The system of claim 1, one or both of the first and second ETDs comprising a
phone.

   3. The system of claim 1, the received message comprising a multimedia message.

   4. The system of claim 1, one or both of the first and second ETDs comprising an
intercom providing simplex or duplex communications.

15   5. The system of claim 1, the second ETD serializing user input actions and
transmitting data representative of the serialized user input actions to the second computer for re-
characterizing the data as instructions for the first computer, the instructions comprising control
information to relay directives to the first ETD.

   6. The system of claim 5, the first edge terminal comprising one or more display
20 elements, wherein the directives instruct the first ETD to change illumination of one or more of
the display elements.

   7. The system of claim 6, the first ETD comprising one or more display elements, at
least one speaker, and at least one display, the directives instructing the first edge terminal to
perform one or more of the following: change illumination of one or more of the display
25 elements; change illumination of the display elements in a pattern illustrating one or more
suggested actions for a user at the first edge terminal; emit sound through the speaker as one or
more suggested actions for a user at the first ETD; emit sound through the speaker as the content;
show one or both of text and graphics on one or more displays as one or more suggested actions
for a user at the first ETD; and show one or both of test and graphics on the display as the
30 content.

8.   The system of claim 5, the first edge terminal comprising at least one speaker, wherein the directives instruct the first ETD to emit sound through the speaker as one or more suggested actions for a user at the first ETD.

9.   The system of claim 5, the second ETD having one or more audio sources for capturing sound as at least part of the content.

10.   The system of claim 5, the second ETD having a one or more video sources for capturing one or more images as at least part of the content.

11.   The system of claim 5, further comprising a server connected in network with the first and second computers, for storing one or more received messages until the first ETD has a state to receive the stored messages.

12.   The system of claim 5, the user input actions comprising one or more of keystrokes, voice commands, and tactile inputs.

13.   A software product comprising instructions, stored on computer-readable media, wherein the instructions, when executed by a computer, perform steps for controlling the computer and an ETD connected to the computer, comprising:

instructions for interpreting user inputs of the ETD;

instructions for re-characterizing the user inputs as directive instructions for a second computer, the directive instructions comprising control information for a second ETD connected to the second computer; and

instructions for capturing content from the ETD, through the computer and second computer, for delivery to the second ETD.

14.   The software product of claim 13, the instructions for capturing content comprising instructions for capturing multimedia information.

15.   The software product of claim 13, the instructions for interpreting user inputs comprising instructions for utilizing one or more entities executing in the computer.

16.   The software product of claim 13, the instructions for interpreting user inputs comprising instructions for resuming one or more waiting executable entities within the computer.

17.   The software product of claim 13, the instructions for interpreting user inputs comprising instructions for interpreting one or more of keystrokes, voice commands, and tactile input at the ETD.

18.   A method for best effort delivery messaging for a recipient user agent, comprising the steps of:

as directed by the recipient user agent, forming one or more surrogate proxy user agents for the user agent; and

5   through operation of the surrogate proxy user agents, storing multimedia data for the recipient user agent due to one or both of (a) unavailability of the recipient user agent and.(b) request by the receiving user agent.

19.   The method of claim 18, the step of storing comprising registering with a registration entity such that notification events on changes of user agent's availability are

10   received by surrogate proxy user agents.

20.   The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of attempting delivery of the multimedia data when the user agent becomes available.

21.   The method of claim 20, further comprising the step of ranking the multimedia data for sequentially-ordered delivery of the multimedia data when the user agent becomes

15   available.

22.   A method for best effort delivery messaging for a sending user agent, comprising the steps of:

forming a list of one or more receiving user agents as specified by the sending user agent; and

20   forming at least one surrogate proxy user agent for each of the receiving user agents; and

through operation of the surrogate proxy user agent, buffering multimedia data for its respective receiving user agent until the receiving user agent is disposed to receive the multimedia data.

23.   The method of claim 22, the step of buffering comprising managing the

25   multimedia data as distributed across a network, and further comprising one or more of prefixing, appending, inserting, combining, and mixing other data with the multimedia data, and one or more of blanking, deleting, and filtering the multimedia data.

24.   A server system for managing mark-ups of multimedia data of one or more communicating devices on a network, comprising:

30   means for buffering first multimedia data; and

means for accepting inputs from the communicating devices to mark-up the first

multimedia data such that, for each mark-up, a node is added to a hierarchical list

structure having child and peer relationships, and such that applying the mark-ups

to the first multimedia data defines a second multimedia data that is of equal or

5   different duration and content to the first multimedia data.

25.   The system of claim 24, wherein the mark-ups comprise one or more of prefixing, appending, inserting, combining, and mixing other data with the first multimedia data.

26.   The system of claim 24, the first multimedia data comprising a first audio message, the inputs comprising one or more second audio messages, wherein the second

10   multimedia data postfixes, prefixes, mixes or combines the second audio messages with the first audio message.

27.   The system of claim 24, the first multimedia data comprising a first audio message, the inputs comprising a deletion, blanking or filtering specification, wherein the second multimedia data comprises only a portion of the first audio message.

15   28.   The system of claim 24, further comprising means to traverse the hierarchical list structure to apply semantics as specified one or more of the nodes to the first multimedia data and produce the second multimedia data.